

MEMORANDUM

2430

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

ACTION

June 20, 1974

*Included in  
brief package*

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: Richard Ober ✓

SUBJECT: PFIAB Follow-Up Letter  
on the Soviet Strategic Threat

At Tab A is a copy of a June 13 letter to the President from Admiral Anderson, Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). This letter is a follow-up to PFIAB's letter of April 30, 1974 giving its annual report on Soviet strategic threat.

BACKGROUND

Staffing action on PFIAB's original report on the strategic threat (1760X) is now being coordinated in the NSC staff; staffing had been delayed awaiting a Defense Department response which will apparently not be forthcoming. The June 13 letter is included in the 1760X package as Tab D.

SUMMARY OF PFIAB LETTER

The letter reenforces points made in the April 30 report but does not propose specific action. PFIAB reiterates its concern over uncertainties regarding the USSR. PFIAB acknowledges the DCI's response to its April 30 letter and a subsequent briefing of PFIAB by the DCI. PFIAB, nevertheless, continues to disagree with the judgment of the latest NIE on the Soviet strategic forces and is unanimous in its "... judgment that ten year projections of what the Soviets are likely to do cannot be made with the degree of confidence which these national security issues require". PFIAB expresses its concern lest ten year projections "... unduly encourage a sense of complacency detrimental to the continuing development of adequate U.S. strategic forces".

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NSS Review Completed.

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Pages 4-6

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2

COMMENT

Staffing action on the June 13 letter has been incorporated in that on the original April 30 report by PFIAB (Action 1760X). Further action is not required by either Secretary Kissinger or the President. Since a response to PFIAB from the President has been so long delayed, an acknowledgment of PFIAB's report from you to Wheaton Byers is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum (Tab I) to Wheaton Byers, Executive Secretary of PFIAB acknowledging Admiral Anderson's letter of June 13 and advising him that PFIAB's April 30 report is a valuable contribution to intelligence and policy makers on a topic vital to the national security.

OPTION

\_\_\_\_\_ No response to PFIAB's June 13 follow-up letter.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR: WHEATON BYERS  
Executive Secretary, President's Foreign  
Intelligence Advisory Board

The Board's letters of April 30 and June 13, 1974 concerning the Soviet strategic threat are welcome contributions on a topic vital to the national security. The Board's views will be of value to both the Intelligence Community and to those elements of the government responsible for assuring the adequacy of U.S. strategic forces.

Brent Scowcroft  
Major General, USAF  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

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**SECRET**

**THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON**

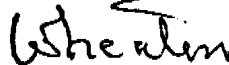
**PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD**

**June 13, 1974**

**Dear Brent:**

Further to the Board's April 30 letter on the threat assessment, and a discussion with DCI Colby on June 7, enclosed is a follow-up letter to the President which is self-explanatory.

Regards,



**Wheaton B. Byers**

**Major General Brent Scowcroft  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs**

**Enclosure: Ltr to Pres, dtd 6/13/74  
from Adm Anderson**

**SECRET**

**Unclassified upon removal of  
the enclosure**

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Pages 4-6

**SECRET****THE WHITE HOUSE****WASHINGTON****PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD****June 13, 1974**

Dear Mr. President:

In a letter dated April 30, 1974, your Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board forwarded to you its annual strategic threat assessment. Copies were simultaneously sent to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence. Among several areas of concern which were addressed in this report, the Board disagreed with a statement in NIE 11-8-73, Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Attack, which says "under no foreseeable circumstances in the next ten years are the Soviets likely to develop the ability to reduce damage to themselves to acceptable levels by a first strike against US strategic forces."

The DCI was asked to personally reassess the basis for this judgment and has done so in a letter to you dated May 18, 1974. The DCI amplified his rationale in a briefing to the Board during its last meeting on June 7, 1974, the thrust of which is that he continues to endorse the foregoing statement.

The Board is most appreciative of the DCI's special efforts and rapid response to its concerns. However, the members remain unanimous in their judgment that ten-year projections of what the Soviets are likely to do cannot be made with the degree of confidence which these national security issues require.

The DCI's presentation to the Board was commendable for its clarity and logic. The conclusion of the briefing, however, contains the essence of the Board's principal concern: that the US lives with a number of uncertainties regarding the USSR, any one of which could alter our perception of its capabilities and intentions to an enormous degree. These uncertainties are: Soviet goals? Damage levels which the Soviets would regard as acceptable? Performance of strategic weapons systems? Soviet technological advances? US/USSR interactions?

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On this basis, Mr. President, we remain concerned lest ten-year projections of Soviet perceptions, capabilities, and intentions unduly encourage a sense of complacency detrimental to the continuing development of adequate US strategic forces.

Respectfully yours,

  
George W. Anderson, Jr.  
Admiral, USN (Ret.)  
Chairman

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

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